

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /062 W

-----037874 221616Z /47

O 221529Z JUL 77

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8255

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1517

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJ: THIRD PLENUM RESULTS: PRELIMINARY IMPRESSIONS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE THIRD PLENUM COMMUNIQUE (REFTEL) SEEMS A CAREFULLY DRAFTED CONSENSUS DOCUMENT WHICH MANAGES THE NEAR-IMPOSSIBLE: RESTORING TENG HSIAO-PING'S POSITIONS AND PRESTIGE WITHOUT ERODING HUA KUO-FENG'S CREDIBILITY AND WITHOUT CALLING INTO QUESTION MAO TSE-TUNG'S ROLE IN THE 1976 PURGE OF TENG. FOR THE TIME BEING, TENG HAS BEEN AWARDED THE MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE PACKAGE: RESTORATION OF HIS PREVIOUS POSITIONS (WHICH LEAVE HIM SUBORDINATE TO HUA IN BOTH THE PARTY AND THE STATE) AND LINKAGE OF THIS DECISION WITH HIS SUBMISSION OF TWO LETTERS TO HUA AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. HUA IS PRAISED AS THE "GOOD STUDENT" AND "SUCCESSOR" OF MAO WHO BOLDLY MOVED AGAINST THE GANG OF FOUR. AND THE DOCUMENT SIGNALS CLEARLY THAT NO DEMAOIZATION WILL BE PERMITTED FOR THE MOMENT. BUT
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THE DOCUMENT MAKES NO REFERENCE TO HUA'S CURRENT TITLE OF PREMIER -- PROBABLY A DELIBERATE OMISSION DESIGNED TO PERMIT TENG TO MOVE INTO THAT SLOT AT THE FORTHCOMING 11TH PARTY CONGRESS. THE COMMUNIQUE GIVES NO HINT AS TO WINNERS AND LOSERS IN THE PROTRACTED STRUGGLE SURROUNDING THE QUESTION OF TENG'S RETURN AND THE HANDLING OF MAO'S LEGACY; POLITBURO MEMBERS AT THE

PLENUM ARE LISTED IN THE USUAL ORDER. END SUMMARY.

2. THE COMMUNIQUE OF THE THIRD PLENUM OF THE 10TH PARTY CONGRESS STRIKES US AS A CAREFULLY DRAFTED CONSENSUS DOCUMENT WHICH SKIRTS DELICATE QUESTIONS AND THEREBY MANAGES THE NEAR-IMPOSSIBLE: RESTORING TENG HSIAO-PING'S POSITIONS AND PRESTIGE WITHOUT ERODING HUA KUO-FENG'S CREDIBILITY AND WITHOUT ADDRESSING THE EMBARRASSING QUESTION OF MAO'S PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE 1976 PURGE OF TENG.

3. RESTORATION OF TENG'S PREVIOUS POSITIONS -- PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN, VICE PREMIER, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COMMISSION, AND CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF -- IS THE MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE PACKAGE TO TENG AND HIS SUPPORTERS. MOREOVER, THERE IS IMPLICIT LINKAGE OF THIS DECISION WITH SUBMISSION OF TWO LETTERS BY TENG TO HUA AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. THE NET EFFECT IS TO PORTRAY TENG AS THE SUPPLICANT WHO EMERGES SUBORDINATE TO HUA IN THE PARTY, STATE, AND ARMY.

4. MOREOVER, THERE IS A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO BOLSTER HUA'S PRESTIGE, TERMING HIM THE "GOOD STUDENT" AND SUCCESSOR" OF MAO WHO BOLDLY MOVED AGAINST THE GANG OF FOUR AND PROVED HIMSELF WORTHY OF MAO'S PERSONAL SELECTION. THE UNPRECEDENTED COLOR PHOTOGRAPH OF HUA (MEETING US COMMUNIST

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PARTY LEADER MICHAEL KLONSKY) ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE PEOPLE'S DAILY ON JULY 21 WAS DOUBTLESS INTENDED AS A SIGNAL TO THE CHINESE PEOPLE THAT HUA HAD EMERGED UNDIMINISHED IN STATURE FROM THE PARTY PLENUM.

5. BUT WE SUSPECT THAT TENG WILL ULTIMATELY -- PROBABLY AT THE 11TH PARTY CONGRESS -- MOVE INTO THE PREMIER SLOT. THE PLENUM COMMUNIQUE MADE NO MENTION OF HUA'S PREMIERSHIP. TENG, HIS SUPPORTERS, AND THE MAJORITY OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE UNDOUBTEDLY BELIEVE THAT TENG -- THE ANOINTED SUCCESSOR OF CHOU EN-LAI -- IS LEGITIMATELY ENTITLED TO THE PREMIERSHIP. AND THE HUA/KLONSKY PHOTOGRAPH MAY BE A STEP IN PREPARING PUBLIC OPINION TO ACCEPT HUA AS A PARTY AND SPIRITUAL LEADER IN THE MAO MOLD, NOT THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT.

6. THE PLENUM COMMUNIQUE ALSO HIGHLIGHTS THE UNITY THEME BY NOTING THAT RESPECT WAS PAID SIMULTANEOUSLY TO THE ENTIRE PANTHEON OF DECEASED LEADERS, FROM MAO AND KANG SHENG ON THE LEFT TO CHOU EN-LAI, CHU TEH, AND TUNG PI-WU ON THE RIGHT. PRESUMABLY THIS IS ALSO INTENDED

AS A SIGNAL THAT SURVIVING POLITBURO LEFTISTS -- LI TE-SHENG,
WU KUEI-HSIEN, NI CHIH-FU, WANG TUNG-HSING -- NEED NOT FEAR
FOR THEIR POSITIONS.

7. OTHERWISE THERE IS NO THING AS TO THE IDENTITY OF WINNERS
AND LOSERS IN THE PROTRACTED STRUGGLE SURROUNDING THE
LINKED QUESTIONS OF TENG'S RETURN AND THE HANDLING OF
MAO'S LEGACY. ALL POLITBURO MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE PLENUM
ARE LISTED IN THEIR USUAL ORDER (WITH TENG INSERTED IMMEDIATELY
BEHIND YEH CHIEN-YING IN THE RANKS OF PARTY VICE CHAIRMEN
AND POLITBURO STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REHABILITATION, POLITICAL LEADERS
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PEKING01517
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770262-0547
Format: TEL
From: PEKING
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770729/aaaaayne.tel
Line Count: 127
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1775497
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THIRD PLENUM RESULTS: PRELIMINARY IMPRESSIONS
TAGS: PINT, CH, (TENG HSIAO-PING)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bfbc5b65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009